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Black Lavender

A Midwestern Magazine for Lesbians of Color

Volume I, Issue 1

January/February 1998

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A Midwestern Magazine for Lesbians of Color

January/February 1998 Volume I, Issue 1

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Editor's Nook

Well it's finally here, a magazine for lesbian sistahs in the Midwest. I've read numerous magazines from the east and west coast but there is nothing based in the Midwest.

Black Lavender is coming into existence as a result of current publications not addressing the issues that affect the lives of lesbians of color.

Black Lavender will strive to bring lesbians of color a publication that is sensitive to our unique needs. Also, it will serve as a medium to showcase our talents. Our hope is to create a publication that is serious, pleasingly informative, political, entertaining yet bold enough to make inclusion of challenging topics. Lesbian of Color voice's need to be heard and now we have Black Lavender.

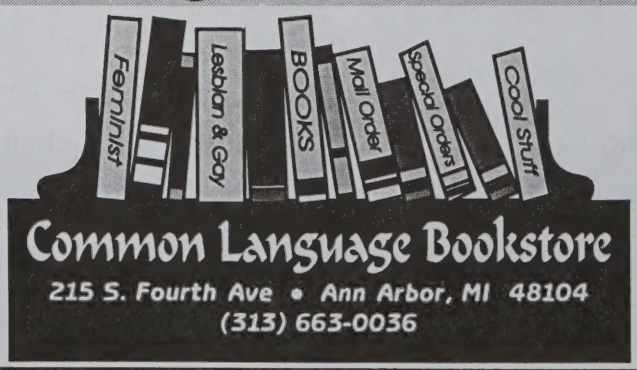
The magazine will be distributed throughout the Midwest, in the following states: Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Missouri, Iowa, Kentucky and Kansas. Look for us at your favorite Womyn's or Gay/Lesbian bookstores.

Publishing this first issue is very emotional for me, for years I've talked about the need for such a magazine. I thank all those who made submissions and all those who had my back. It is my hope that each issue will get better and better. In the name of sisterly love, Black Lavender was created for you, my sistah's, let the spirit of our lives shine through this magazine.

I dedicate this issue and every issue hereafter to Terri Jewell, a dear friend who motivated, inspired and supported me.

Your Sistah In the Struggle,

Charlotte M. Young, Editor



Black Lavender™

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Volume I, Issue 1 January/February 1998

Publisher
Young Girl, Inc.

Editor
Charlotte M. Young

Contributors
Tonda Clark, Theresa Houston, Kalimah Johnson, M. Liz Marshall, Gabrielle Montgomery, Cheryl Newell, and Tracene White

Cover Artist
Valeria J. Ervin

Black Lavender™
is published 6 times per year by
Young Girl, Inc.
P. O. Box 31-1917
Detroit, MI 48231-1917
(313) 831-2044 phone
E-Mail: BLKLAV@aol.com

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PRINTED IN THE USA

The Sistah Everyone Knows...

Dr. Kofi Afua Adoma

Occupation: Forensic examiner for the 3rd Judicial Circuit Court Criminal Division Psychiatric Clinic in Detroit, Michigan. Also, serves as a Psychotherapist part-time.

Born: October 19, 1956 (Libra) in Detroit, Michigan to Jane and David Robinson II.

Education: B.A. in psychology, Oberlin College. M.A. Educational Psychology and Ph.D. Clinical Psychology from the University of Michigan.

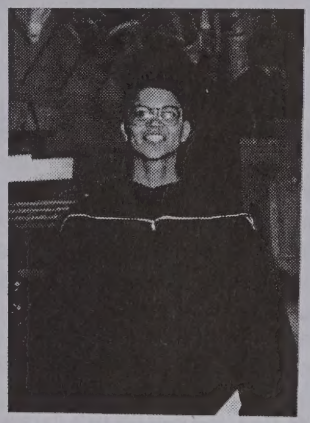
Hobbies: Sleep (only joking!) Working out, tennis, drumming, playing the violin, roller-skating, music, drawing cartoons and photography.

Status: Single, yet currently monogamously dating.

Favorite Color: Green

Favorite Food: Chicago Style Deep Dish Pizza

Inspirational Persons: Mother (Psychologist), Grandmother (Violinist), Grandfather, the late Dr. C.A. Alexander, Mrs. Ivy Barrett (High School Literature Teacher) and Dr. Ruth Ellis (friend)



Dr. Kofi Afua Adoma
(Amorie Robinson)

....but what you didn't know.

Nestled just to the east of Palmer Park (a popular hang out for African American Gays and Lesbians) is a Victorian Style White House residing on a residential one way street. This is the home Dr. Kofi Afua Adoma. The residence is modestly furnished and in the front room lies her major accomplishment, her Doctoral degree and her dissertation entitled "Black Identity and coping with stress among African Americans in a predominately white university setting."

It is late evening and she has agreed to meet for an interview. She's slightly tired having worked all day and just came in from Choir Rehearsal at Full Truth Unity Fellowship Church . Once settled we discuss her life, her activism, her accomplishments and her hopes for the future.

LIFE

Kofi was born in Detroit, Michigan, where she lived until 3rd grade. After which the family moved to Highland Park where she went on to complete grade school, middle school and graduated from Highland Park High School. She accounts involvement in many student organizations.

She went on to Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio. Old photo albums reveal how she wore an impeccably groomed large Afro. Imagine that. At Oberlin she founded the Black Student yearbook and a local grade school tutorial program, both of which are still in existence. In 1978, she graduated from Oberlin with a degree in Psychology. She was well on her way to success.

Upon graduation, Kofi returned to Michigan and resided with her father in Ypsilanti, Michigan. Needing money, she worked at the Ford factory for a year to earn money to buy a car and to pay for her Master's Degree.

In 1979, she began attending the University of Michigan, where she worked on her Master's in Educational Psychology and was finished in one year. While at the University of Michigan she worked at Perry Nursery School as a teacher's assistant and had her own radio show at a local Ann Arbor radio station, WCBN.

During this time, she discovered the Gay & Lesbian community through someone she met at a Angela Davis speech in 1979. The idea of a woman-loving woman relationship would get Kofi in touch with her deeply rooted attractionality (a term devised by Kofi). Her first relationship didn't last long and she didn't immediately come out to her family, but Kofi discovered once and for all that she was a lesbian.

With her Master's degree completed, she returned to Detroit and landed a job as a counselor for the Lewis College of Business's Upward Bound program. In no time at all, this part time position turned into a full time position with a promotion to Director of Counseling Services. She eventually met a woman and co-parented her daughter , Brandy. Kofi lovingly refers to

Continued

The Keys to Wholistic Living

Part One

By Tracene White

This past October, I had the opportunity to attend the 1997 Annual Spiritual Convocation of Unity Fellowship Church Movement in Los Angeles, California. One of the workshops was entitled, "Wholistic Healing" and the presenter was the Elder A. Kwabena Rainey Cheeks, Pastor of Inner Light Unity Fellowship Church in Washington D.C. The information reported on, is a result of the information gained from the workshop and individual research.

First things first, you need to know that there are five parts to each of us. These five parts consist of the physical, mental, emotional, intuition and the spiritual.

Physical
is the state of the body

Mental
is the state of the mind

Emotional
is the internal or external display of feeling

Intuition
is the instinctual power to know

Spiritual
is the essence of the soul's conscious understanding

Each part is inter-connected, meaning you can't touch one without touching the other four. When problems arise, it will eventually show up in body as physical symptoms. For example, emotional distress can result in ulcers, mental distress might result in depression and then display itself in the physical. What's important is to find the root of the problem and discover in which part of our being has the trouble originated. The key to a successful process is to get all of our body's five parts, namely the whole to vibe harmoniously together. The wholistic approach is how we endeavor to create balance and bring these five parts into balance. When all the parts act in unison the healing begins. We must also realize that there is a difference between healing and curing. Curing is the quick fix remedy and always has temporary results. Where as healing is the process that involves changes that last a lifetime. Wholistic living represents an attitude, a way of life.

Everything from your thoughts, to the words you say, to the food that you put into your body, effects and speaks about your wholeness or lack there of.

In part one, we will briefly explore our mental self, (the mind), and our physical self, (the body and it's natural processes to heal).

MIND

The channel of energy in the body is the mind. Whatever you're thinking or projecting is what energy you send out. Do you know what the most powerful energy is that the body can produce? It's an orgasm - the spark of life. What are you putting into the universe at that moment, during sexual climax? What are your thoughts? The mind is a powerful thing. Have you ever thought, what would the world look like if everything you said came true? The truth is the world would look exactly as it does because everything you say does come true. You create your own reality with your words. Think about it, God said and it happened. The spark of God and the creation of God is in you. You are a co-creator with God. You are therefore creating your world with what you say, *it's that real.*

BODY

The body can only breakdown fats, minerals, vitamins, carbohydrates and proteins. The body is nothing but a bunch of tubes that channel everything we eat. The body absorbs the energy and nutrients and dumps the rest.

Now the question is how do we keep the body, (our system), functioning well? Sip hot water in the morning and evening. It wakes the system and it begins to flush the system because the body has been processing all night. Try adding lemon and/or cayenne pepper. The lemon adds flavor as well as help cleanse the palate and the cayenne pepper brings energy to the body. When you brush your teeth, brush your tongue also.

No one knows exactly how the body works, it is the most complex machine on the planet and it comes without instructions. Yet one thing is clear, the body needs to cleanse itself. We need to assist our body in it's cleansing process. Again the body is nothing but a bunch of tubes, from your mouth to your anus is one tube.

The body needs cleansing constantly. This doesn't mean just washing the body, but internally, our body needs cleansing. Because of the pace at which we operate, we don't usually get the body on a cycle long enough for the body to do what it needs to do, so our body's become get clogged. Eat at the same time everyday, this will help regulate your system. Do not eat after 8:00 p.m., the body will not process any new input of food after this time. Your body has a clock indigenous to where you live. The sun sets this clock.

There are several ways we can aid our body in it's cleansing process.

- Spend a day just eating fruit, (apples, melons, oranges, bananas and pears), along with plenty of water, the body will start to eliminate the garbage from your system. The body needs water to cleanse itself. It also needs water to heal. Try to drink 8 - 8 ounce glasses of water a day. Warm water helps digest food.

Continued on page 8

Sisterly Expressions

Sisterly Expressions is dedicated to the creative writings by lesbians of color. Submissions are always welcome. No strict guidelines and we will attempt to publish everything sistah's send in. **Enjoy!**

Bi -My -Sexual -Self

By

Kalimah Johnson

Bi - my sexual self - loving beings of separate kind
Loving men and women, wanting both at my side
But not at the same time,
too much for my mind

However, I'm blinded by the grace and beauty of femininity
While being swept away by muscle bound masculinity
And BI sexuality is not sexual activity...but

Intimate creativity in and out of the bedroom
Bi - my sexual self is daytime walks in the park
dancing after dark
laughter before and after,
sights, sounds, smells, dwelling in my heart of poetry and art,
music and movies
dining and wining
jazzy and juice

I am captivated, something needs to loose me
my Lucy loves tenders licks from Susie
As well as sensuous kisses deep and wet from Nick
with the big dick

I can't be helped, its just my desires are wild
as forest fires
and I will not leave it up to this society
which want me to pick and decide...and choose

And with my Bi - sexual self I peruse
my two sided can't be loosed blues
Because I love them both for different reasons
and all seasons.

And because this whole world is fucked up and confused
What I'll do is become a sexual being
all Bi - My - Sexual - Self.

The Goddess

By
Gabrielle Montgomery

It had been a year, a bad year, I guess. A lonely year and it seemed to drag on like a bad lecture. I wanted to get out of the rut I was in and have some sort of fun, you see fun had left my life with Beth. I wanted fun more than anything...well, almost anything. Since I broke up with Beth (Or more herstorically, Beth broke up with me), I had had sex exactly once and even that was with Beth.

Beth had a sort of power over me, she was so incredible. Her hair was the richest chocolate brown and smelled like, oh I don't know, music. She was more beautiful than life and she knew it. The first time I saw her, it was too much for me to dream she might be gay, too much to hope. I was afraid to wonder if this woman could love women, because if she could, perhaps she could love me. Too much to ask, I thought gay or not, the woman is a Goddess.

She made her first move, by asking my name and I stammered like a shy child, "Lacey." She was confident and strong and I knew in a heartbeat that I would love her for the rest of her life, and saint be praised, she would love me too. For a while anyway.

Two years and eleven months; two years, eleven months and sixteen days and I was in heaven. Put there by the Goddess, I knew that what she felt inside and out, from the top of her thick chocolate hair to the bottom of her cinnamon brown feet. Her heart and soul spoke to me. I knew her moods and she knew mine. When I was sick she brought homemade soup. When I had a bad day, she would buy tickets to a show or some music. Or as she put it, "one of those ecofriendly herbal concoctions." She complained but without me asking, she would drive forty-five minutes out of her way to get them. And I thought we were perfect together and I didn't know until the day she moved out, that we, well, weren't. It wasn't me she said, it was Audrey. She had fallen in love, unfortunately so had I.

On the day she left, I told her for the first time, that I wanted to have kids, a family and not adoption either. No madam, I would carry our children with her holding my hand every step of the way. She kissed my face, neck and body so lovingly. We made love in such a fantastic way that I knew, or thought I knew, that it was right. Beth and Lacey, perfect couple, with two point three children. The sex was as good as when we first were together, and I guess that was Beth's going away present. You know, to go out with a BANG, so to speak. The next day of my life, the part of my life that has to do with happiness stopped.

It wasn't the last time though, six months later Beth came to my door, her hazel eyes reflecting in the moonlight, her hair shorter and she was more incredible than I remembered. She came in and cried on my shoulder. She told me things weren't working out with Audrey and that she had been a fool to leave me. Oh, she would leave Audrey, her lover, the lover she left me for, and come back to where she belonged. She kissed me so deeply, that I felt we were becoming one, and my heart, among other things, softened and my body said yes, Oh God yes, Beth came back to me. And what a cliché", she said she'd call. Two days later, she hadn't and I told my friend Sandra about what happened. She said, "I always hoped lesbians were smarter than we straight women were, I figured that was how women would take over the world." She smiled her brilliant white smile and it made me smile too. Sandra was the type of woman that everybody had a crush on. It wouldn't matter if you were a man, woman, gay or straight, she drew you in. "But" she continued, "apparently when it comes to love even you can make dumb choices." At this her tone became softer, but more serious, "she isn't going to call, she used you, darling." I had known this but to hear it made it real, and I began to cry. Sandra was a good friend, good for making me smile, good for making me face the truth, good for making me cry and she stayed all that night. She even called the next morning and every morning until I stopped crying, some four months later.

Even that final taste of Beth had been six months ago; not even a card on my birthday. I turned thirty, a big one, and she couldn't spend two bucks to say "Hi, glad your not dead."

I thought all sorts of things, in month seven I thought, the army, join the army, see the world. Get away from memories and Beth. Get some discipline, I hate getting up to make it to work by ten, so getting up at six or earlier, not me.

Month eight, the convent was the answer. Become a nun, but a year without sex (okay six months) had nearly killed me. So to spend the rest of my life without, no way. Besides I'm not catholic.

Month nine, men, yes, the logic seemed clear get married to a man. I had dated men in my teens and had been married to one for eight months. It wouldn't be that bad as long as he was intelligent, loving and caring. As long as he was a giving lover, even the sex

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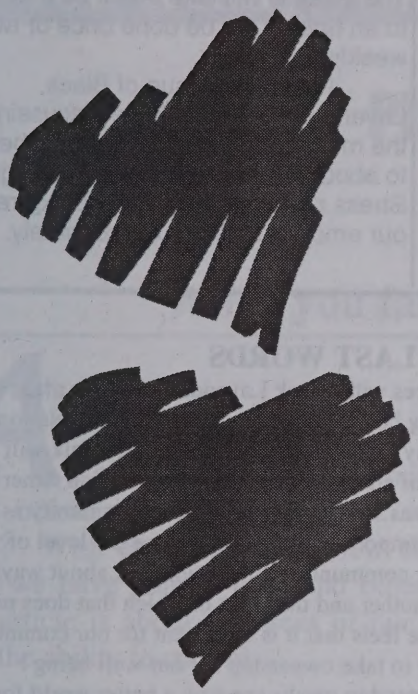
AT 2:30 IN THE MORNING



She only meets me on the dark side,
this woman so comfortable in her skin.
Her eyes holding many secrets,
If you look into them, you can see the heat of all her passion,
and the coldness of all her pain.
They always betray her heart.
She has a mouth that was made for giving pleasure,
But inside lies a tongue that can cut like a knife,
Carving accusations, pairing lies, stabbing innuendoes,
I've been wounded by the edge of her blade.
Her hands were created to touch a woman,
hold a woman, fill a woman up inside.
I'd let her handle my soul with those hands,
If I could.
If she wanted to.
Her body feels good,
Her body feels real good,
Her body feels sooooo good.
But now her body restrains a spirit
that has turned away from the light
of love.

By **Tonda S. Clark** an African-American lesbian poet, short fiction writer and performance artist currently residing in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Uncap My Naps

Charlotte M. Young

Nappy is rooted in my particular origin, quite similar to the ash
Examining the hair of my African ancestors makes me proud of my past

Then the Bible says that Jesus had hair made of wool
Rough, hard and wired like cotton on a spool

Hair packed to my head, slightly puffed and kinky
Undistinguishable wave pattern, can't tell if it is lengthy

My friends suggest that I straighten it, but I like it curly
Avant-garde is my protocol, forget about being worldly

This hair comes in shades of bark, grounded in a cultural scalp
The world's only hairstyles needing no barber or beautician help

You say I have two choices, to wear it nappy or permed
I'll stick with the nappy cause I hate when it burns

My lover's fingers may get caught pushing pass the naps
But I'm proud of my untamed natural bush, giving rest to my cap

Now say it loud
I'm nappy and I'm proud!

Wholistic Living continued from page 4

- Try a just fruit fast for three days.

- Organic grape juice is a great cleanser.

- Enemas - help pull the junk out of the body. If what you eat and what your body discards weighs the same what does that say to you? When you eat three meals daily and only use the restroom once what happened to the other two meals? Intestinal tubes get coated, the walls of the intestines is where the nutrients are absorbed into the body. If they are coated, the intestines will have a hard time absorbing and therefore will waste the nutrients that your body needs.

- Laxatives - cleanse the intestinal track. You can make your own using, distilled water (8 ounces), raw salt (1/2 tablespoon) and black strap molasses or raw honey (1 tablespoon). The laxative will take affect 30 minutes to an hour. Can be done once or twice weekly.

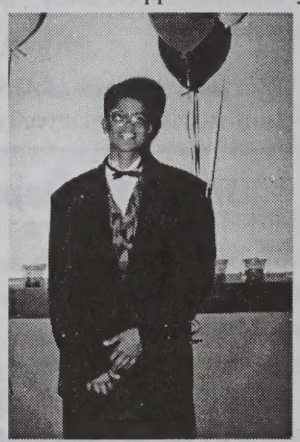
In the next issue of Black Lavender we will continue discussing the mind and body. We will also begin to about our emotional self, (feelings). Stress management, how do ex[press our emotional selves appropriately.

Dr. Kofi continued from page 3

Brandy as her God daughter and over the years they have maintained their relationship.

After her stint at the Lewis College of Business, she landed a position at the University of Detroit as an Admissions Counselor. In time, she met Pat, her first long term relationship which lasted seven years. She then bought the house she is currently living in. Having worked at the University of Detroit for five and a half years, she decided to go back to school to pursue her Doctoral degree.

Kofi moved back in with her father in 1989, and began work on her Ph.D. Between work, school and community involvement, she dated but never re-entered into another long term relationship. A proud day, May 3rd, 1996, Kofi graduated from the University of Michigan with her doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology.



Kofi moved back into her in Detroit home after graduation and began working for the 3rd Judicial Circuit Court - Criminal Division Psychiatric-Clinic as a forensic examiner . Kofi also provides psychotherapy at Counseling Associates in Southfield, Michigan.

ACTIVISM

In the 80's, Kofi co-founded several organizations; Family (now known as Our Family), Detroit's first black Lesbian organization, the Detroit Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays and the James Baldwin/Pat Parker Society. She served on the Kwanzaa Planning Committee and was one of the founding members of Full Truth Unity Fellowship Church, where she began the Womyn's Rap series.

The highlight of Kofi's community involvement and activism has been in the 90's. This is when she co-founded the A. LORDE Collective, a Detroit based Black Lesbian organization), she is currently serving as a mentor for Affirmations Mentoring Program, she has served on Detroit's Black Gay Pride planning committee, and is a member of a poetry performance group called "Two Dykes and a Drum." She has been featured in national publications, served as a presenter/facilitator for numerous organizations and organizational committees, and has perfect attendance at some of these annual events. A few of these events include the Unity Fellowship Church Movement Annual Convocation, Sistahfest sponsored by ULOAH, Nia gathering and the National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum, in which she attended all ten and will be a keynote speaker at their conference. February 1998.

LAST WORDS

Dr. Kofi shares with Black Lavender what she plans to share with folks during her speaking engagement at the National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Conference. Her talk will emphasize the theme of embracing ourselves as African American Gay and Lesbians as well as embracing our community as a whole. She feels it is important for us to increase the level of self-esteem within our community and she will talk about ways we can support one another and the ways in which that does not happen. Secondly, she feels that it is important for our community to take ownership for our well being . Ownership means creating a better world for the next generation and to build alliances with the mainstream Black community and mainstream Gay/Lesbian community. Also, she feels we need to take better care of our youth and elderly.

In closing, Kofi's final comments were, "Y'all we got something here that needs supporting. Contribute to it, use it and don't let it die. We have a voice, we have a lot to say to the world and there is no need to keep it all to ourselves. Use Black Lavender as a tool to build some bridges.

Two pages is clearly not enough to include the life hertory of a profound sister like Dr. Kofi. But it is my hope that something was shared and learned.

To Dr. Kofi Adoma, Black Lavender is proud of you and wish you continued success in all your endeavors. PEACE and LOVE!

Kofi Kards

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Planning For Change

Columnist
M. Liz Marshall

"When you fail to plan, you are planning to fail."

As we embark upon another new year, I come before you with a question...what are your plans? With each new year, new changes occur, some we have control over and others we do not. This article is about the areas of our lives that we have the ability to control.

In two more years, we will have crossed into a new millennium and that's a pretty scary thing, to me anyway. Just recently, I've taken a little inventory of my life and everything is truly not in order. You know, each year, I have gone to great measures to plan for the actual New Year's soiree; the dress, my hair and my make-up. Yet, not a plan in sight for my life. This year, I realize that the quote at the opening of my article may seem simple, but it is very true.

Just have your plan girl, that is all I'm advocating.

At any rate, I hope I've got you thinking about a few things. For instance, are there changes that you would like to make in your life? Do you have a plan or a way to accomplish your mission? First, try getting out a sheet of paper and take inventory. Where are you now? Where would you like to be? What changes in and around your world would you like to see? These are questions I've had to ask myself. My partner tells me I'm seeking meaning in too many things as I embark upon my journey towards thirty...don't y'all get me to lying, I could be!

Anyway, back to the subject at hand, make your list, then prioritize and be sure to be real with yourself. Do not set yourself up with all of this deep stuff and then get discouraged by trying to do everything in a a short amount of time. Just have your plan girl, that is all that I am advocating. Once you have your plan, you go about your way making the changes you deem fit.

Let me share a few of mine with you. Happiness is my number one, the vitality of my existence depends upon my being happy and surrounded by positive energy. Therefore in 1998, whatever and whomever comes my way with pessimistic baggage has got to go...quickly.

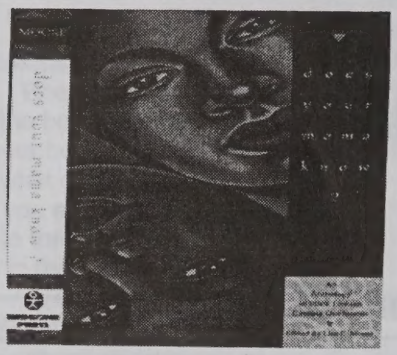
Secondly, it is my utmost desire to get real tight with the creator, God. Through prayer, meditation, church, reaching out to family and friends in love.

Another important factor in my life is finances. I really need to take care of my financial state. I will do eveything within my power to be debt free this year.

Maybe you're thinking you missed something since the article is entitled, "Planning For Change" and all that I've really touched on is planning. In actuality, working on being happy, more spiritual and fixing my financial mess are all changes for me.

In closing, I say to you in the spirit of sisterhood, be good to yourselves and to others. Make your plans in order to bring about positive, healthy changes and celebrate life. Peace and blessings, I hope y'all feel me.

BOOKSHELF



The first published anthology of coming out stories by Black women-loving women is here, **Does Your Mama Know? An Anthology of Black Lesbian Coming Out Stories.** Editor Lisa C. Moore has produced a ground breaking collection of works by a mural of well known writers such as Terri Jewell, Jewelle Gomez, Cheryl Clarke, Becky Birtha, Makeda Silvera and other established and new voices.

(Redbone Press, 19.95)

Titles to Check Out

Femme:

Feminists. Lesbians and Bar Girls
Edited by
Laura Harris and Elizabeth Crocker
This book attempts to look at the history of feminism, butch/femme and queer thought to discuss ways in which femme identity has been idealized.
(Routledge, $17.95)

IF THIS WORLD WE"RE MINE

E. Lynn Harris has out done himself again his new book, The story of four friends reunited. Harris plays out so eloquently, in soap opera form the life of four buppies and their reunion.
(Doubleday, $23.95)

Sex Tips for Straight Women from a Gay Man

by
Dan Anderson & Maggie Berman
(HarperCollins, $12.00)

If Only for One Night

by
James Earl Hardy
(Alyson, $17.95)

Early Embraces

by
Lindsey Elder
(Alyson, $11.95)

Low Hanging Fruit

by
G. B. Mann

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Health & Fitness

Happy New Year!!

By Tracene White

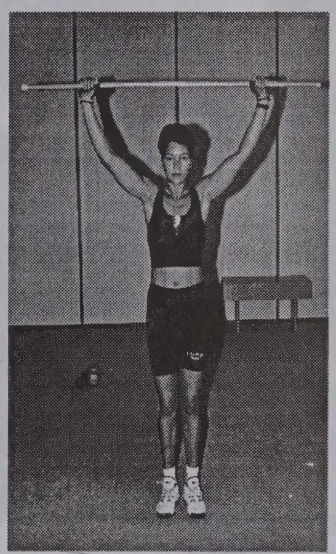
Okay let's hear 'em. Hear What? Your New Year's resolution that's what. I know you've made 'em. Come on what will it be this year? Have you vowed to quit smoking, find a new job, perhaps a new love, how about to go back to school. Come now, don't be shy, okay, I'll go first. My New Year's resolution is the same as it was last year and the year before that, (it's a process), I want to shape up. This to me means more than just losing weight, but trimming down will be an added bonus. My goal is to become more aware of what my does or does not need or want. In '97 I came closer to my goal than in any previous years combined, but as always, there's room for improvement.

Already of pork and red meat, I decided to take it a step further, I started monitoring - calories from fat as well as fat grams, (*most important being calories from fat*). To reduce my body's percentage of body fat, my goal has been, for no more that 25% of my total daily caloric intake to come from fat, this is based on 1,500-calorie nutritional program. This took a little getting use to, but it became easier with practice. Notice there has been no use of the word **diet**. What I am trying to accomplish is a permanent change for long term gain not a temporary reprieve.

Along with changing my eating habits, I have added a structured workout program to my schedule. the following four exercises have help me tremendously. The exercises are perfect for the beginner and can be done at a gym and/or at home.

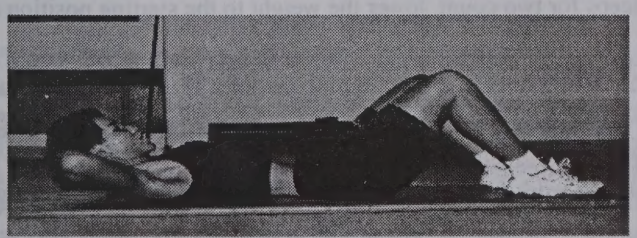
1. *Oblique Stretch*

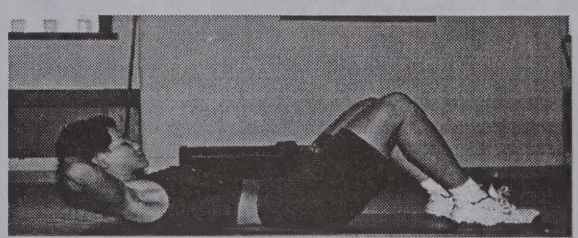
works the obliques - love handles



hold bar using wide overhead grip, relax elbows,
bend and stretch to one side,
return to the starting position,
repeat on other side

3 sets, 20 reps each side





2. *Crunch*

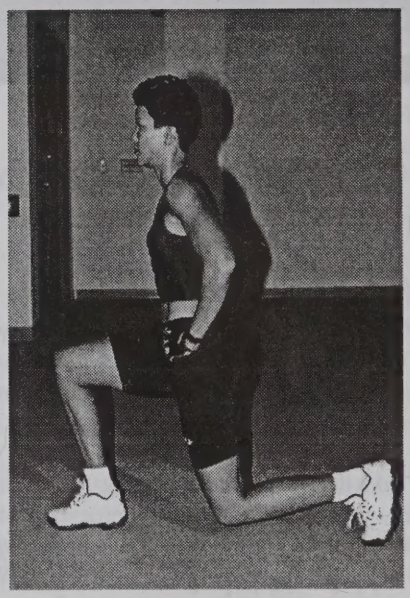
works the abdomen

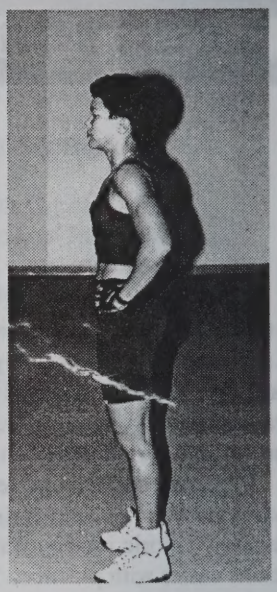
laying on your back, legs bent at the knee, hands, locked behind your head with head slightly raised, while squeezing or contracting abdomen muscles, keeping should blades on the floor, lift head

3 sets, 25 reps

3. *Walking Lunge*

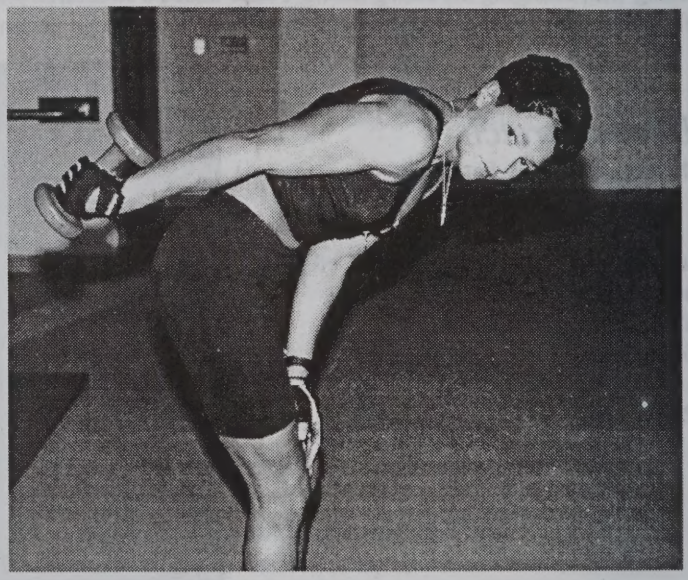
works the thighs and hamstrings as well as shape the buttocks





stand tall, hands on hip, step and lower knee of back leg as close to the floor as possible without touching the floor, rise up and repeat the process taking another step, balance is important, so go slow

2 sets, 15 - 20 steps each way



4. *Tricep Kickback*

works the triceps - back of the arm

with light barbell, stand with feet together, bend at torso, keep upper arm stationary, with an elbow of 90 degrees, hold elbow tight against your body, extend forearm until arm is locked out, contract triceps for two count, lower the weight to the starting position and repeat for disgnated reps before switching

3 sets, 10 - 12 reps

Focus on using perfect form, learn to feel the muscle you're working, feel the squeeze and contraction. Doing this will keep you from involving other body parts that would take away from the specific muscle(s) you're exercising.

Try this and you'll be of to a great start. It worked for me and it will work for you. I'm trimming down and my energy level has increased.

Patience is the key. If you're consistent with your nutritional program and workouts, with the proper amount of rest and the right frame of mind, I guarantee you will get results.

Good Luck!

Model - Theresa Houston / Photographs - Tracene White

The Goddess continued from page 6

wouldn't be that bad. I'd have my little house, family and white picket fence.

And wouldn't that show little Miss Beth. I knew that had no chance. My ex-husband once commented, "I knew you couldn't love me or could not love me because for you, it is as unnatural to be with a man as it is for me." He was a good guy, but it wasn't for me. I would hate to hurt someone like that again.

By month ten, I decided that love was a fairy tale and I could be just fine without it. By month eleven, I did not care who it was I fell in love with, I was just so lonely, so completely alone.

Then one day a miracle happened. I was hurried and not looking my best. It was Saturday, warm, and I wanted nothing more than to go swimming. I loved the water, swimming and fishing. But today was a swim day. I had errands to run first but I had on my bathing suit under my jogging suit. I looked terrible but I didn't care. All I cared about was getting into that cool invigorating water and the very thought pulled me through the day. I was doing my last errand, at the post office, about to go (water on the brain, so to speak) when I looked up and saw Jayne. She looked at me and smiled. That smile was like coming into the house after a storm. I knew and she knew too. Instantaneously my life, this part any way, began again.

That was the best summer of my existence and life was perfect. I was in love; Jayne was a perfect complement to myself. Where I was lacking, she was plentiful, where she had little I had more than enough. She was my soulmate, my life was set. Then of course, Beth came back. Beth said Audrey left her, for another woman. She was sorry; she was more beautiful than ever. She wanted me, wanted kids, marriage and to live happily ever after. My heart was filled with a kind of joy, more than ever before. It was the Goddess, it was Beth. Beth wants Lacey. Beth with her pouty mouth and hazel eyes. Beth with her brilliant mind and perfect round breast that I wanted to caress until the end of time. Beth, I thought finally, who tore out your heart not once but twice in the last fifteen months. And Jayne who loved you, Jayne wasn't the goddess, she was not La Grande Dame. Jayne, was just a person, not plain but not gorgeous. But Jayne would never make love to you knowing she was leaving you the next day. Jayne would never toy with your affections, just to stroke her own ego. No, Jayne was not the Goddess, Jayne was love. "I will love you for the rest of your life, " I told Beth, "But I have a woman in my life and she is my everything." Goodbye Goddess, I can worship at your feet no longer.

When I told my good friend Sandra about it the next day, she smiled her contagious smile and said "See, I knew women would rule the world one day." She threw back her dread locked hair and laughed. She was still laughing as she begged me to tell her the story over and over again.

When I told the story to Jayne, she took my hand in hers and said, If you went with her I would have understood," she was close to tears, but she was sincere, "I love you, Jayne and I will love you forever." No Jayne is not the Goddess; Jayne is love, MY LOVE!

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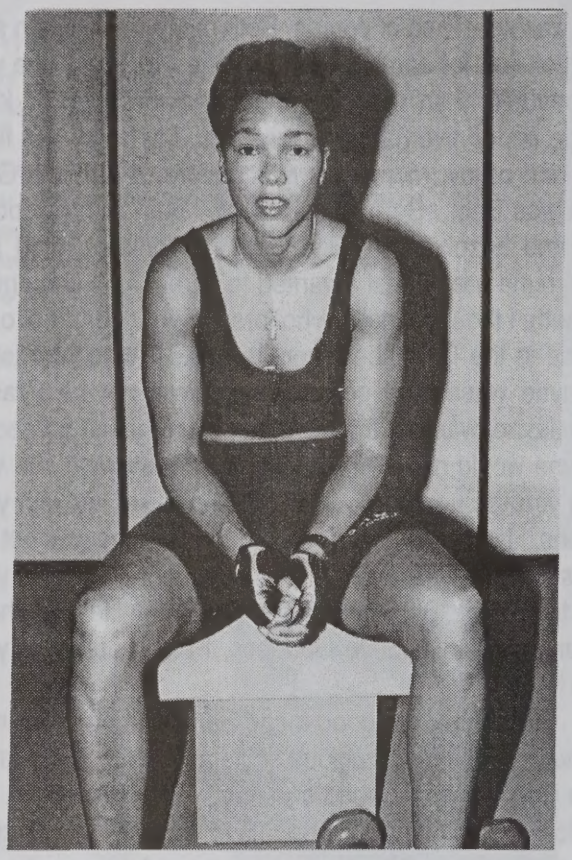

Photograph by Tracene White

Coming Next Issue

Theresa Houston

Health & Fitness Columnist

Do you have those nagging questions about exercise, eating right, cardiovascular workouts, aerobics, walking, fat grams, building muscles, etc.? Well, get the answers you need to live a healthy and fit life by writing to Theresa at the address below and watch for your answers in the next issue of Black Lavender.

Send your questions to:
BLKLAV - Theresa
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OUT WRITE '98, The Seventh Annual National lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered WRITERS" conference, held Feb. 20th thru Feb. 22nd, 1998 in Boston, Massachusetts. For more information write: OutWrite '98, 29 Stanhope St., Boston, MA 02116 or call 617-262-6969, fax 617-267-0852 or email: outwrite@terranet.com

ORGANIZATIONS

A. LORDE Collective (African American Lesbians Organized to Renew Dignity and Empowerment). Meets every third Sunday at Affirmations G/L/B/T Community Center (Ferndale, MI). For more information write: ALC P. O. Box 1693 Royal Oak, MI 48075 or call (313) 862-3396

ASIA: Asian Sisters In Action
For more information write: ASIA c/o The Center for Women's Culture 4605 Cass Ave Detroit, MI 48201

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By Cheryl Newell 05/21/96

Forbidden Fruit

She who has never tasted forbidden fruit has never truly lived.
For my veritable life had not begun until I caught the essence of your nectar, as I soon became so drunk with passion that I dared take a bite.
Frozen with fear was I upon the realization of my actions, my emotions.

Desire.

Hunger.

Satisfaction.

Freedom.

Love.

Everything was made clear as I began to realize that I could no longer be silent.

I could not go back, though I tried.
Flip-flopped.
Back and forth
Into wasted time I threw myself without stopping to view the continuance of a lifetime.

Secrecy.

Hatred.

Fear.

Until I could lie no more.

It is not the forbidden fruit that has kept me here.
But the sheer enjoyment of *possessing* the fruit forbidden by many, feared by all; yet can be scorned by none.

For it is this fruit that tastes the SWEETEST, grows the TALLEST, is the STRONGEST, and holds its own the GREATEST than the fruit so greatly praised.

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